

THE CRUTCH.

Charles Boswell, - - - - - Publisher

U. S. GEN'L HOSPITAL, DIV. 1, SATURDAY, JAN. 28, 1864.

Winter in Maryland.

After successive dark, dull, stormy, ominous days, and 'spells' unfamiliar to the Clerk of the weather, and the 'oldest inhabitant,' have come at last two days of enchantment, or what the Germans would call pearl-days, born of the deariness of a single night, and springing into beauty more resplendent than any carnival the tropics can show in the high noon of Summer!

On these crystal days how just and generous is nature! over the meaneast twig, tiny, broken grass-blade, and coarsest stubble, she throws a tiara of jewels fit to crown a king! No artist hand could re-produce, or imagery enhance the magic beauty of these seas of crystal studded with islands, and extending far as the eye can reach; those arbors and temples, gleaming with jewels, linked with silver cords hidden away among the trees and shrubbery, heretofore familiar to us, but transfigured by the magic hand of the frost-king, into such fairy creations we dare not touch them, but stand afar off and let the flash of the emerald, ruby, diamond, sapphire, and purple, dazzle and blind us! Of the single trees, the falling spray of the willow is perhaps the most striking. Lighter than a cloud-fringe, more graceful than a fountain frozen in full play, its delicate tracery bends and sways beneath the pressure of every ice-drop, until each branch becomes an arch strung with fairy-bells, so ethereal, so translucent, that the touch of a bird's wing might snap them into showers of pearls. Then, every small, homely brown bud, has its own casket of crystalline beauty and perfectness, in which it sits as complacently as a queen bee in amber, magnified to thrice its real size, and apparently rioting in its magic dress of marvelous radiance; the sharp outlines of the holly are all subdued and softened—seen through the silver veil that enfolds it, while the sycamore and oak stand erect as statues, 'draped in sheeted splendor.' Every vase, pail and bucket, has its silver net and pendant fringe of finest lace-work, while the wooden one-armed pumps, wear stars that out-rival any Brigadier General's in the land.

Beyond a sketch of landscape flooded with glory,—

"Far away a hundred hills,
Stand bathed in mellow light,
All covered deep with Winter's snow,
All radiant and bright."

We have attempted only a touch at a scene so weird and wondrous, and that, with the intent to remind our readers that they can mark two days in this year's calendar as *white*.

Personal.

The occasion of special local interest last week in Div. 1, was the arrival of LIEUT. GEN. GRANT, and a part of his Staff, on their way to Washington.

On the 25th, VICE ADMIRAL FARRAGUT arrived from Washington, and immediately proceeded to Fortress Monroe. MAJ. GEN. MEADE, accompanied by a staff officer, reached here on the same morning, and left for Washington in the afternoon.

The Surgeon in Charge, with his usual promptness, immediately waited on these distinguished visitors, and tendered them the hospitalities of his house. The Band took special pleasure in welcoming the heroes of battles, in which some of its members had participated; and everybody counted it a favor that the ice in the Potomac had diverted thither these persons on the present stage of action, whom we esteem it an honor to see.

Persons fond of skating, have an opportunity to enjoy the luxury in and about Annapolis. There is sufficient ice in this vicinity to give a precarious footing to any number of people who think exercise the best promoter of health.

We are happy to acknowledge the receipt of the *Convalescent*, a new paper, published at the U. S. A. General Hospital, Jefferson Barracks, Mo. Success to it.

Extract from a letter written by a young resident of Annapolis, while visiting New York city.

CITY OF NEW YORK,
December 1st, 1864.

DEAR COUSIN ANN:—Oh! how I wish you could get a right smart chance to come down to New York, folks do enjoy the war so here. The ladies dress just as military as they can be—they wear brass buttons and epaulets an chokers, an cloth caps just like the officers, an real infantry plumes in their hats, and great wide leather belts clasped with spread-eagles, an Aunt Joe says that all the ladies that belongs to the Women's League wears real Cavalry boots. Aunt Joe wears 'em, and they look right pearte, tho' its troublesome telling her from Uncle Joe when they are back to, for you know she is a good bit the tallest. Well, Uncle Joe is home on a furlough, he is 2d Lieut. of the Heavy Cavalry Reg't now, an he come home a McClellan man, but Aunt Joe declared she would never set down to a meal's victuals with him till he changed his politics. She's a powerful war woman you know, an so he got tired of his evil ways, and finally told her, he reckoned he'd let little Mac. take care of himself an he'd look after Abe. So, Aunt Joe took off his medal and throwed it into the fire, washed his face and combed his head with two kinds of combs, made him shave and change his clothes, and take the oath on the dictionary, that he wouldn't do so again, and he's come out right smart Union! * * * I've been shopping all day long an haven't bought nothing but a bonnet pin, a pair of rats an some new hair for a cascade, an a set of square dress buttons. You might as well tell Magruder to throw away his round ones, for everybody wears square ones in New York. * * * Just think of it! Capt. Smith has been way down to Annapolis, to see Lucy Brown that used to live in Baltimore, and couldn't find her house. I seen him in New York last week, an he told me he walked all over Annapolis till he was tired out, an then he took a horse an rode round till he got lost, and then he hitched his horse to the State-house, and headed for the cars, having seen nothin nor nobody. I was right cut up about it, but I'm sure I don't know whether it is our folks' fault or his'n. I've concluded that next to Annapolis, I'd sooner live in New-York than any place I've been, there's more doing here than there is in Anap., but there isn't so many dogs, and you know how I like dogs, and there is so much noise here that you can't hear your own ears. Yesterday Aunt Joe an I went ridin' way up in town in a Bus, a go-cart a good deal like an Ambulance, but I didn't enjoy it one bit, because I couldn't hear myself or Aunt Joe talk. So we jest sot an thumped our heads against the machine, an stared out of the window till we was almost blind—on one side of me was a greasy baby with a dirty cap cocked over one eye, who insisted on clenching hold of my new sea-foam with both fists, while on the other side sat a lady from Ireland with an oil can in her lap an a bundle of clothes at her side. I told Aunt Joe I thought we had better walk back, if she could stand it, at which Aunt Joe was mad in a minute. 'What,' she said, 'a member of the Women's League, an not stand anything?' 'She could walk to Richmond if she was a mind to. She only rode because it was the fashion.' I said nothin more, for I'm afraid as can be of the League, but after a while the Bus spilt us out, and Aunt Joe rolled one way an I the other, when we should have both gone the same way. For once I was right, an she was wrong, an after I got my senses collected together, I had the satisfaction of seeing her borne across the mud to my side of the street by two kind Policemen. I wish you would tell the Annapolis people about these Policemen, how kind and attentive they are, an how clean they keep the streets. It would do you good to see how nice they dress, and they couldn't be more polite to ladies, if they was born princes. But I have written a long letter, so no more at present from your ever loving Cousin.

Most of the patients in the Hospital Div. 1, are doing well, baffling as best they can with the effects of the hard treatment received during their imprisonment.

Just now, the number in the hospitals at this post is small. We hope an exchange of prisoners will soon be effected.

Oil on the Brain.

A correspondent of the Cincinnati *Commercial*, writing from Parkersburg, Va., gives the following description of the all oil-prevading mania in that locality:

If you want to be bored, come to this region. Here's the place where you bore and get bored. It's nothing but oil from morning till night—oil on paper—boiled oil—people talk, write, sleep, and snore oil. Ask a man how far it is to Charlestown:

'Twenty-six miles from Slabsides' oil spring.'

'What time does the steamer leave for Wheeling?'

'Just as soon as Slocum's oil is loaded.'

'What was the fight about yesterday?'

'Oil.'

'Jenkins married an oil well yesterday—or just as good—married Miss Snifkins, whose father struck 'ile' a few days ago.'

Snifkins hadn't time to go to his wife's funeral last Tuesday—his 'Ile would run over.'

Preachers preach about oil being poured upon the troubled waters, and say this is the very spot where the oil for that occasion comes from.

I slept on four barrels of oil last night—every hotel full. The entire country looks greasy, people have oily tongues, and your oilfactory nerves are strongly impressed with the terrible stench. Everybody has territory for sale, and there are plenty of 'fools and their money' who anticipate the realization of the Baron Munchausen stories that are afloat.

Every sharper has a map of the region, and can tell a stranger exactly where the nicest spot is—he has been there, knows the place, but is short of funds—has no personal interest in the matter, not he indeed. But in mere matter of friendship advises you to buy there and then do what he is doing—bore and oil must come.

Men seem crazy; victims are plenty. Seeking to become suddenly rich many a tolerably well-to-do, but over-sanguine individual goes his pile and loses all he has and sneaks off: a few strike ile and become millionaires, but not one in a hundred but get their fingers terribly burned.

"Travels like Pisen."

Not long since an old lady entered the Independent Telegraph office and said she had a message to send to Wheeling. In a few minutes her note was deposited in a dumb waiter, and ascended in a mysterious manner through the ceiling.

'Does that go to Wheeling?' inquired the old lady.

'Yes, ma'am,' answered the clerk.

'I never was there,' contined she, 'but it hardly seems possible that their town lies in that direction.—When will I get an answer, Mr. Telegraph?'

'I can scarcely tell ma'am; it may be two or three hours.'

The old lady went away, and returned in exactly two hours. Just as she entered the door the dumb waiter came down through the ceiling.

'There is the answer, ma'am,' said the clerk.

The old lady took the neat yellow envelope in her hands, with a smile of mingled gratification and astonishment.

'Now that beats all,' exclaimed she. 'Bless my heart; all the way from Wheeling, and the wafer still wet.—That's an awkward looking box, but it can travel like pisen.'

A Chinese boy, just learning to read English, came across this passage in his Testament: "We have piped unto you and ye have not danced," and rendered it thus:—"We have toot, toot to you, what is the matter you no jump?"

What is that, the fewer there are to guard it, the safer it is? A secret.

A facetious boy asked one of his playmates how a hardware dealer differed from a bootmaker? The latter replied, somewhat puzzled, 'Give it up.' 'Why, because the one sold nails, and the other nailed soles,' was the reply.